

Vermont Senior Center Earmark Project
Grantee Final Report Excerpts
April 2007

Barton Senior Center.

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Meals are now being prepared on-site. Site was serving 6-8 people two days/week; now serving approximately 50 people two days/week.
 - Provision of transportation for older adults to indoor recreation center in a neighboring town increased access to fitness programming (Tufts Strong Living and Steps to Healthy Aging programs).
 - Meal site manager attended SERVSAFE training. Has implemented new safe food handling procedures in kitchen.
 - Partnering with Vermont Foodbank for delivery of farm fresh produce.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Accommodating growth in participation. Stricter standards of safe food handling have tightened access to kitchen. Participants felt put-out by restrictions on kitchen access.

Barre Housing Authority

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Conducted orientation to Senior Wellness and Nutrition (SWAN) Program for 30 people.
 - PR event (Club Blue) sponsored by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of VT, included dinner. Attended by 50 people. Additional 10 SWAN participants were recruited at this event.
 - Nutrition education session held at the fitness center following an exercise class (presented by RD from the local hospital).
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Provision of transportation to and from fitness center from the senior housing site cost more than anticipated. Transportation authority agreed to waive additional fee.
 - Making the DAIL evaluation tool fit the SWAN program.

Champlain Senior Center

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Purchase of salad bar equipment and hiring of chef to staff new food production area.
 - Soup and salad bar offered five days per week.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Underestimated the amount of time required to recruit/train volunteers.
 - While the new soup and salad bar is popular, the volume of participants choosing to eat at the salad bar is not sufficient for long-term sustainability (at this point in time).

Central Vermont Council on Aging

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Completed development of eight-week curriculum for *Holding Hands* .
 - Two 8-week *Holding Hands* sessions have been held.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Enrollment in *Holding Hands* classes has been lower than planned; also, the number of men has not met targeted participation rate. Caregivers find it difficult to attend the regularly planned classes.
 - Meal/socialization component following the classes has not happened because of scheduling issues.

Covenant Community Church

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Addition of Thursday meal; serving approximately 20 seniors.
 - Internet access now available following IBM donation of computers; Internet Café is functioning.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Targeted start-up date in July has conflicted with participant summer vacations and travel, resulting in lower than targeted enrollments.

Woodstock Area Council on Aging

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - New website has been launched.
 - Evening transportation provided for seniors to attend programs at the senior center.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - High cost of gasoline has caused seniors to think twice about attending programs at the senior center.
 - Stigma of “senior” attached to the center and its activities; local residents express interest in attending programs/events, but are reluctant because they do not consider themselves “seniors” yet.

Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Start-up of computer resource center.
 - Nurse has been available two days per week for Ask the Nurse.
 - Marketing campaign promoting Menu for Healthy Living is underway.
 - Participation in meals and other activities has increased.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - None reported.

Brattleboro Senior Center

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Purchased salad bar and convection oven.
 - Held two ‘Luncheon with the Arts’ programs.

- Participation has increased on salad bar days and special arts luncheon days.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Delivery of salad bar delayed.
 - Extra staff time required to keep salad bar stocked and clean.
 - Forecasting produce needs for salad bar to avoid leftovers.

White River Junction Council on Aging

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Completed script and story board for PR/volunteer recruitment video/DVD.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Delay in funding from DAIL caused production of video/DVD to fall behind schedule.

Heineberg Senior Center

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Created website and separate phone/voice mail for 'Wit, Wisdom and Wanderlust' (WWW) project.
 - Completed two outreach sessions to determine needs, priorities and gaps in services/programs for new population of seniors attending the site.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Early recognition of need for dedicated staff person to manage/oversee the WWW project.
 - Early recognition of need to create new senior center image to attract younger older adults.

Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources, Inc.

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Silver Sneakers exercise program is in place two days/week, and is attended by 8-10 seniors/class.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Collecting data, completing surveys and conducting focus groups required more time than planned.
 - Finding instructors to lead classes.

Waterbury Area Senior Center

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Developed and posted market analysis survey on website of major employers in Waterbury and included an insert in local newspaper.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - One local employer who had agreed (during the drafting of their proposal) to distribute survey to its staff, never responded to the invitation, resulting in reaching 200 fewer individuals.

Castleton Community Center

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Mailed community survey to 2,100 Castleton area residents with a follow-up postcard mailing.
 - Held one chronic disease self management class (Healthier Living Workshop); 10 seniors attended.
 - Opened a computer resource center.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Survey distribution was postponed due to printer delays.
 - Undelivered mail was not returned by the Post Office, making accurate computation of response rate difficult.

St. Johnsbury Senior Center

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Marketing campaign is underway.
 - Advisory group has been convened; re-named the center, selected identifying logo for the center, etc.
 - New website established.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Learning the new computer technology has been a challenge for the director.

Island Pond Community Services

- Major activities/accomplishments
 - Distributed newsletter announcing new activities offered at senior center.
 - Established walking program that meets two days/week.
 - Partnership with local farm has resulted in fresh vegetables for seniors and increased use of fresh produce in menus.
 - Attendance at meal site has increased.
- Problems/barriers/challenges
 - Resistance of seniors to adopt healthy eating and physical activity.
 - Cooking class was poorly attended.